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TO THE

Congregation of St. Thomas's Church,

BY THE

BISHOP OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

**ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND:
J. C. WITHERS, QUEEN'S PRINTER.**

(1853)

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

Congregation of St. Thomas's Church

AT THE

BISHOP OF DUBLIN

BY THE
REV. JOHN J. O'NEILL

TO THE CONGREGATION OF ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH, &c.

MY FRIENDS,

I have now before me the two subjoined documents, upon each of which it seems due to you to offer some remarks:

The first,—which appears to be a Report of certain proceedings at a Meeting of the Pewholders and Congregation of St. Thomas's Church held at the Vestry the 30th day of May, 1853, pursuant to public notice, signed by R. PROWSE, Chairman,—was forwarded to me on the 4th of June, with a private note from Mr. PROWSE himself.

The second—which is an Address from fifty-six Pewholders in St. Thomas's Church—was sent without any note, or other formality, on Thursday last the 9th instant.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS, &c.

“ At a meeting of the Pewholders and Congregation of St. Thomas's Church held at the Vestry on the 30th day of May, 1853, pursuant to public notice,

“ The reply of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese to the recent address of this Congregation having been submitted by the Churchwardens to this meeting, it was

Resolved,—That this meeting regrets that the Bishop in the communication submitted to us should have refused to accede to the reasonable request of the members of this Congregation to have the Rev. Mr. GATHERCOLE appointed as the Minister of St. Thomas's Church.

Resolved,—That the proposed appointment of the Rev. Mr. WOOD is for various reasons objectionable to this Congregation and would be unsuitable to their wants and requirements.

Resolved,—That all due means be taken to prevent the imposition upon us of any but a clergyman in whom should appear to combine the necessary qualifications, with sound Evangelical principles.

Resolved,—That a Committee be appointed to consider and report to an adjourned meeting in the following matters,

1st.—In whom the right of nomination and presentation of the Incumbent of St. Thomas's Church is vested?

2d.—What further steps ought to be taken by this Congregation to sustain their just rights, and to support the principles they entertain?

ROBERT PROWSE,
Chairman."

It is painful to be obliged to notice in this report, as in the first address forwarded to me on my return to St. John's, several small inaccuracies.

(1) My reply was not to "an Address of the Congregation," but to "R. PROWSE, Esq., and forty-seven others;" and it was forwarded to Mr. PROWSE, not as Churchwarden, but as the gentleman whose name stood at the head of the list of signatures.

(2) I did not "refuse to accede to the request of the members of the congregation to have the Rev. Mr. GATHERCOLE appointed as the Minister of St. Thomas's Church,"—but of forty-eight only, whom I was not authorized to regard and address as "*the* members of the congregation."

(3) The appointment of Mr. Wood should not be represented as "objectionable to the Congregation," as several members have expressed themselves satisfied with it.

It is not of course competent to me to object to the appointment of a Committee, nor have I the least wish to interfere with their consideration of and report on the matters submitted to them; but I should be very sorry to believe that such proposals emanated from the whole Congregation, or the majority.

THE ADDRESS.

"TO THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF
NEWFOUNDLAND, &c.

May it please Your Lordship,

We, the undersigned, Pewholders in St. Thomas's Church, beg respectfully to signify to your Lordship that if you will be pleased to induct the Rev. Mr. TUCKWELL as In-

cumbent of St. Thomas's he will be gladly and cordially received by the Congregation, with a fervent hope that all existing differences and difficulties may thereby be removed.

(Signed) " ROBERT PROWSE,
And fifty-five others."

" St. John's, June 4, 1853."

I cannot help fearing that some parties have been induced to sign this Address under an impression that I was at liberty and prepared to alter the arrangements I had announced in my reply to the Address forwarded to me on my return to St. John's. I see the names of several gentlemen who, I am sure, would not have surmised that I could recall an offer once deliberately made to a Clergyman, and accepted by him; and who, I am equally sure, would not willingly add to my embarrassments.

On the other hand I miss the names of several members of the Congregation, who would, I am persuaded, gladly embrace any fitting opportunity of testifying their respect for Mr. TUCKWELL, and their high estimation of his qualifications as a Clergyman.

To these Gentlemen I feel the more indebted, believing that they have denied themselves a gratification, either

(1) because they would not suggest to me the withdrawal of an offer once deliberately made; or (2) because they would not be parties to the apparent hardship of endeavouring to turn out of a preferment a respectable Clergyman, against whom the only objection is one of taste and not of principle; or (3) because they are willing to leave these arrangements in the only responsible hands.

With these prefatory remarks I may now submit to you an Address which I prepared, proposing to submit it to you through a different channel, so long ago as the 4th inst.; and which I earnestly hope may prove satisfactory; or at least bear out the assurance I have already made, that "it is my desire and shall be my endeavour to give the Congregation of St. Thomas's Church all reasonable satisfaction, when higher considerations of duty do not interfere to prevent me."

"ST. JOHN'S, JUNE 4, 1853..

"MY FRIENDS,

"I feel it my duty under existing circumstances, to state to you regularly and officially what I have already communicated to certain members of the Congregation, that immediately upon hearing of Mr. BLACKMAN's death I offered the vacant Church to the Clergyman of next longest standing in the Diocese,—himself the son of a Clergyman and of family-connections well known and much respected in this Colony, but—recommended to me, and, I trust and believe, endeared to all who know him by upwards of twenty years' faithful and laborious service in this Diocese, by sound views, and an unblemished life, by manners most patient and gentle, and every qualification necessary to attach a Minister to his flock, and make him acceptable to them; and accepted of God for CHRIST's sake, in serving them; with the additional claim of a numerous family requiring education in St. John's. There is but one Clergyman in the Diocese in whom all these claims and qualifications centre, the Rev. T. M. Wood, Rural Dean of Trinity."

"Since making this communication it has been reported that on some former occasion I have spoken disparagingly of Mr. Wood, as "weak and vacillating and deficient in learning" and I have been further instructed that in default of obtaining Mr. GATHERCOLE's services the Congregation desire to be ministered to by the Rev. Mr. TUCKWELL.

"Upon this statement I think it due to you and myself to offer a few remarks.

"(1) Unless some person is prepared to exhibit to me proofs of my having so spoken of Mr. Wood, I must be permitted to doubt whether the remark was ever made without qualifications, and to deny that it can be applied to Mr. Wood's condition and circumstances at any time within the last five years.

"(2) When I first knew Mr. Wood he was in very bad health and low spirits, and it is very probable I may have spoken, or written to others confidentially, (though I have no recollection of having done so) what I have not concealed from Mr. Wood himself, that I then considered him weak and vacillating. But after I had been in the Diocese

about two years and a half, when he was in the state represented of body and mind, Mr. Wood went to England, and within about a year after his return I gave the best proof of my no longer considering him weak in body or mind, by appointing him to one of the most extensive and laborious Missions and most responsible offices in the Diocese.

"(3) As Missionary of Trinity and Rural Dean, Mr. Wood has never flagged in his work, or failed in due appreciation of the nature and responsibilities of his office. He has performed, and for the greater part of the time singlehanded, the duties which formerly were divided, or shared between two; and has performed those duties judiciously and efficiently and to the satisfaction of his scattered flocks.

"(4) With respect to Mr. Wood's want of learning, there need be no difficulty in admitting that he, like many other Clergymen highly esteemed in this and other Colonies, had not received education and training for the Ministry. I may have had occasion to allude to this circumstance, but I had no right, or reason, to suppose, and did not suppose, that my predecessor would have advanced him to the order of Priesthood without knowing and proving by examination that he was well learned in all necessary ecclesiastical and scriptural knowledge. This best knowledge, by which an Apostle assures us "we are made wise unto salvation," and by continuing in which we shall "both save ourselves and those who hear us," I believe Mr. Wood possesses in a full measure: and his correspondence with me, which has been very considerable, together with the organization and successful working of the Church Society in his Deanery, has evinced sound sense, practical habits, patience, resolution and perseverance. Of the advantages of his long experience it is superfluous to speak, while so extensive have been his missionary labours and so acceptable, that I might almost say 'his praise is in all the Churches in the Diocese.' On these grounds, far more than on his seniority, which alone would not influence me, I felt it my bounden duty to offer the appointment to the Rev. Mr. Wood.

(5) " With reference to the wish now expressed that in default of obtaining Mr. GATHERCOLE you might have the services of my dear and highly-valued friend and fellow-helper, Mr. TUCKWELL, it should suffice to remark, that I am as unable to recall an offer once deliberately made in favour of one Clergyman as of another,—of Mr. TUCKWELL as of Mr. GATHERCOLE. But I am permitted for your further satisfaction to state, that before I left the Colony last year Mr. TUCKWELL had signified to me the prospect of his desiring, for domestic reasons, to return home, there to settle and abide, and this desire was more positively expressed and urged upon me during my absence (as well by his friends in England as by himself) in a manner which I could not gainsay, or resist. If therefore I had thought it right to pass over the claims of Mr. WOOD, I could hardly have asked Mr. TUCKWELL to accept the situation, which I had reason to believe on other accounts he did not desire.

" All that could be done to meet the wishes of the congregation in this behalf has been done. I have prevailed upon Mr. TUCKWELL, not without some difficulty, to officiate in the Church till Michaelmas. This arrangement has Mr. WOOD's entire sanction, between whom and Mr. TUCKWELL there exists the best understanding, with mutual respect and regard.

" I may take this opportunity of assuring you that no attempt has been ever made and no desire has been ever felt on my part, to introduce any system of forms and ceremonies into St. Thomas's Church. And although Mr. WOOD has been accustomed to wear the surplice in preaching in his own Churches, he is prepared on my recommendation to alter his practice and conform to that of his predecessor. It would indeed be a gratification to him and to me if on the mornings on which the Holy Communion is administered, he were not expected to change his surplice for the gown, and again the gown for the surplice;—to him as he would thereby be saved the trouble and parade of two changes in one service; and to me as I should have some good assurance that the Congregation is prepared to meet us in a spirit of charity and mutual forbearance, and not to contend about matters of form. But this point also will

be readily conceded at the desire of the Congregation, and the black gown always be used in preaching, except when I or the Archdeacon may officiate.

"I am, &c., &c.,

(Signed)

"E. NEWFOUNDLAND."

Commending this address to your careful consideration, and praying God to give you and myself a right judgment in all things, with that "charity which suffereth long and is kind," &c.

I remain,

Friends and Brethren,

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

EDWARD NEWFOUNDLAND.